

## Happiness as a Byproduct of Power

The more that I consider happiness, is this really the goal? Perhaps power should be our ultimate passion in life, increasing it, becoming physically stronger, and more powerful.

### Why?

The more powerful I become, the happier I am. Perhaps happiness is merely a byproduct of your power, courage, or heart.

## Street Photography and Courage

### What is a photograph?

A photograph is a reflection of your courage. **Courage**, or *cor* – meaning heart.

*Your heart is on display in the photographs that you create.*

Just think, does a shy and bashful street photographer have the capability of propelling themselves onto the front lines of life, each and every day, embracing chaos, unpredictability, the unknown, without fear? No.

You must be **courageous, fearless, and intrepid** in order to practice street photography at a high level.

## Elevate the Human Spirit

When it comes to my daily practice, I make sure to photograph with speed, agility, and rapid velocity. I don't photograph in a way that requires contemplation, consideration, but merely snapshot my way through life. **This becomes a much**

**more interesting experience, as the results, the photographs, are determined by my intuition.** Ultimately, I believe that your intuition determines the composition.

*A photographer is responsible for positioning themselves on the front lines of life, pressing the shutter with their gut, and moving forward with their heart.*

Everything else in photography—technical ability, history, knowledge of what makes or breaks a good photograph—can all fall to the wayside. For these things do not matter, but the only thing that matters is that you propel yourself onwards, and upwards, with the grand attempt to elevate the human spirit to new heights.

### **Physics, Gravity, and Motion**

When you set your body in motion, without preconceived notions, you will be surprised at what you will find. For when you walk outside, and propel your body onward, you exist outside the passage of time. When you photograph, you are merely existing, in the now, in the moment, recognizing patterns in both nature, human behavior, and creating something from nothing. **This act transcends all notions of physics and gravity**, as when I photograph, I am creating something that can seemingly last forever—something that transcends this world and exists within the digital world, using modern technology.

Consider architecture or sculpture, and the medium itself. I believe these two art forms are some of the greatest expressions of human achievement due to the sheer size, grandeur, and technical skill involved in creating these pieces of art, such as the sculpture of David in Florence, the Colosseum, or even City Hall here in Philadelphia. **Think about the way in which these men, who built these structures, defy gravity**, by scaling upwards, placing sculptures higher up in the sky, crafting looming columns, rooftops, and intricate details that trim the exterior of buildings or adorn tunnels.

There's something about physics, the laws of the universe, and going beyond them, that makes certain art forms more impactful than others.

*My problem with the physical photograph, in print form, is that it typically exists inside, on a wall, in a frame, displayed in the same old way.*

You have to use particular lighting and stand from a specific distance in order to achieve the proper viewpoint of this work. It becomes two-dimensional and mediocre in my opinion. **Perhaps the digital spaces will be infinite, endless, and accessible to all.** I find more interest in the digital world, as a means for expressing, sharing, and making photography viewable.

*I think that when you set yourself, your art, in a box, whether a room or within the four corners of a frame, it becomes limited. I seek to go limitless, boundless, and transcend all notions of physics.*

## **Design Your Life**

I spent a lot of my years traveling, on the road, living a very nomadic lifestyle. **My experiences are what shape me and my life to this day.** I've had the privilege of traveling the world since I was a little kid, visiting family in Italy for Easter, embracing different cultural experiences since I was around 7 years old, and am now a dual citizen between Italy and America.

I'll never forget the first time I decided to live abroad, studying at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I made an effort to visit all the major Palestinian cities and found a new home in Jericho. After six months, and graduating, I decided to volunteer abroad and returned to Israel. I lived on a kibbutz, worked with cows, farming, and even maintained the gardens, practiced horticulture, and landscaping.

One evening, in the middle of the night, I became bored of this experience, wanting more, so I packed up my bags—which was basically just a single backpack, as I always travel light—and hit the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. I knocked on the doors of the hostel and spent the next few months volunteering there. I swept the floors, mopped, made beds, and even picked up the trash outside, threw it in the trash pit, and burned it. I had a routine, waking up early with the sound of the mosque, *Allah Akbar*, on the speaker, walking to the Majid to pray, coming home to eat breakfast with the Palestinian family, doing my chores, knocking on the door of my friend Mohammed's house, visiting Hassan, watering his garden, chatting, and exploring the desert. **I slept on the floors of mosques, learned about Islam, and even allowed the Imam, Hirsham, to convert me in the end of this experience.** While I am and was born and raised Catholic, I was simply curious at the time, as

an open-minded person, eager to learn. I photographed on the frontlines of conflict between Israel and Palestine. I've seen war, been in many dangerous situations, and lived extremely frugally, most times in simulated poverty. A lot of days, I would get by just eating a few pieces of pita bread and some hummus.

I returned to the United States, seeking more out of life. I heard about the Peace Corps and decided this was the best opportunity for me to continue my traveling. In the Peace Corps, I worked with aquaculture, or fish farming, in remote villages in Zambia, Africa. **I learned the local language, prayed under the Seventh-day Adventist Church, documented baptisms and funerals, and lived amongst the Bemba tribe.** I slept under a thatched roof, with a mosquito net, drew my water from the well, washed my clothes by hand, tended farms, fish ponds, and prepared my own food from scratch—purchasing chickens, slaughtering them, plucking their feathers, and preparing the food by hand. I'll never forget my time in Israel and Palestine, working directly with cows, or even during Eid al-Adha in Jericho, the day of sacrifice, when hundreds of goats were slaughtered all throughout the streets.

*I have an affinity for nature but recognize the hierarchy that exists within it. Human beings are the apex predator, and I believe that we must make sacrifices to increase our power or our happiness.*

However, happiness and power are simple. **You can achieve happiness, or power, by simply going outside, going for long walks, working outside, doing things physically.** I recognize how little you need to get by, after my experiences traveling the world.

I am here, back in Philadelphia. **What is next?**

I'm currently working in horticulture, and I'm starting to really enjoy it. It provides me with time away from the chaos of the city, surrounded by green spaces, and not to mention, it's an art form. I'm very curious about spending time in nature, learning about plants, writing essays, poetry, reading philosophy, and enhancing my artistic abilities beyond just mere photography. **Maybe I could even get into pottery and try new mediums that are more physical.** Who knows where the road will take me, but I know for a fact that I only do things that interest me. I'm not merely here

just to accrue money, retire, and die. I'm here to thrive, on the front lines of life, living, how I choose, and deem interesting. **I think the interesting path is worth considering.**

*Would you rather sit inside the office of the Comcast tower, making \$1 million per day, but never see the sunlight, the sunrise, or sunset, considering the 9-to-5 lifestyle?*

I know for a fact that I'm not cut out for 9-to-5, but I'm currently trying to design my life, where it almost feels like I'm "retired" in a period of *otium*, away from public life, enjoying physical leisure. Personally, I realized that I need to work alone, as most other people just get in my way. I've worked as a photojournalist, worked in the offices of City Hall, a photographer for the city, and even worked in politics.

**Even if a lot of these jobs are seemingly the easy path, where I can even just sit on my butt in my home, or work from Zoom, it's not something that I would ever choose.** I'm trying to design my life in a way that I do not have to check my phone or my email. To me, this is modern-day slavery—being on call, on your phone, sending emails, doing Zoom, even if you work from home. It's not worth it. It's no way I want to live or what I deem to be freedom. After all my travels, **I've realized that true freedom is under the thatched roof.**

**What is the function of capital, money, or wealth?** Perhaps it's to increase your power, make a website, buy camera equipment, meat, weightlifting stuff, have a roof over your head, and ultimately create a family, and make children. I could continue traveling, live frugally, and be a nomad forever, but perhaps the ultimate goal of man is sacrificing yourself for somebody else.

Maybe I decided to start working in horticulture here in Philadelphia because I'm interested in being the best artist that I can possibly be, striving for excellence, and going beyond. **I enjoy being on my feet, moving my body, and exerting physical force.** Perhaps this is where I am meant to be, in the garden, away from the streets.